

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 06599 221602Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 SCA-01 SCS-03 TRSE-00 OMB-01  
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R 221500Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4153

INFO AMCONSUL GENOA

AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IT

SUBJECT: NEW STUDENT VIOLENCE ROCKS ROME UNIVERSITY AND FURTHER  
POISONS AN ALREADY TENSE POLITICAL CLIMATE

REF: ROME 5762

SUMMARY: A NEW OUTBURST OF STUDENT VIOLENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY  
OF ROME ON APRIL 21 LEFT ONE POLICEMAN DEAD AND ANOTHER  
SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. INCIDENTS WERE ALSO REPORTED AT UNIVERSI-  
TIES IN MILAN, BOLOGNA, AND FLORENCE. IN AN EVENING  
PARLIAMENTARY SESSION ON APRIL 21 ALL PARTIES SPOKE OUT  
AGAINST THE VIOLENCE AND CALLED FOR MORE RIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT  
OF THE LAW BUT ONLY THE DC BACKED MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN  
THE HAND OF THE POLICE. THE SOCIALISTS TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO RENEW THEIR CALL FOR AN "EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT" COMPRISING  
ALL "DEMOCRATIC FORCES". END SUMMARY

1. ON APRIL 21 UNIVERSITY OF ROME AUTHORITIES CALLED ON  
POLICE TO OVERSEE DEMONSTRATION AGAINST  
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PAGE 02 ROME 06599 221602Z

UNIVERSITY REFORMS PROPOSED BY EDUCATION MINISTER Malfatti.  
THE SITUATION APPEARED TO HAVE STABILIZED WHEN POLICE  
WERE STRUCK BY GUNFIRE FROM YOUTHS BELIEVED TO BE MEMBERS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY'S FAR-LEFT "AUTONOMOUS COLLECTIVES".  
ONE PUBBLICA SICUREZZA AGENT WAS KILLED AND ANOTHER  
SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. OTHERS LESS GRAVELY INJURED INCLUDED  
PATRICIA BERNIE, CBS ROME BUREAU CHIEF, WHO WAS SHOT

IN THE LEG. ELSEWHERE, SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS REMAIN OCCUPIED BY STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA WHILE INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE AND AT BOCCONI UNIVERSITY IN MILAN. WEEKEND DEMONSTRATIONS ARE SCHEDULED IN ROME AND BOLOGNA AND POLICE ARE PREPARING FOR FURTHER TROUBLE.

2. ACTS OF VIOLENCE CONTINUE TO THREATEN FURTHER DESTABILIZATION OF THE ALREADY TENSE POLITICAL SCENE. VIOLENCE AGAINST THE DC HAS INCREASED MARKEDLY IN RECENT WEEKS, THOUGH PSI AND PCI ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN HIT BY FIRE BOMBS AND VANDALISM. ALTHOUGH NEWSPAPERS HAVE STOPPED PUBLISHING SPECULATIVE REPORTS ABOUT THE DE MARTINO KIDNAPPING (SEE REFTEL) AT THE REQUEST OF THE FAMILY, THE LACK OF ANY APPARENT PROGRESS IN RESOLVING THE CASE WEIGHS HEAVILY.

3. ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 21 PARLIAMNTARY DEBATE CENTERED ON THE ISSUE OF PUBLIC ORDER, WITH INTERIOR MINISTER COSSIGNA AND DC CHAMBER GROUP LEADER PICCOLI CALLING FOR MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE POLICE. SPEAKING FOR HIS PARTY, PCI CHAMBER GROUP LEADER NATTA CONDEMNED THE VIOLENCE BUT MAINTAINED THAT PRESENT LAWS ARE SUFFICIENT AND NEED ONLY BE ENFORCED MORE EFFICIENTLY. LAY PARTY SPOKESMEN ALSO CALLED FOR ACTION AGAINST THE CRIMINALS AND THE PI AND PSI WERE PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE VIOLENCE. PARLIAMENTAY GROUP LEADERS DECIDED TO PUT OFF THE FLOOR DEBATE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND POLICE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ROME 06599 221602Z

REFORM WHICH WAS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE ON APRIL 28 AND 29.

4. REACTIONS FROM PARTY HEADQUARTERS WERE IMMEDIATE WITH DC SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI ISSUING A PARTICULARLY STRONG CONDEMNATION OF THE VIOLENCE. THE PCI SECETARIAT CALLED THE MURDER OF THE POLICEMAN "A NEW BARBARIC PROOF" OF THE DANGER THAT EXTREMISM REPRESENTS TO DEMOCRACY AND CALLED ITS PERPETRATORS DE FACTO AGENTS OF FASCISM. TH PSI TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW ITS CALL FOR A "GOVERNMENT OF EMERGENCY" COMPRIS NO ATL "DEMOCRATIC FORCES" TO CONFRONT THE CRISIS AND FOR A CLARIFICATION OF THE DC'S POSITION ON THE INTER-PARTY CONSULTATIONS. CLEARLY THE DEEPENING CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE HAS EXACBATED THE ALREADY TENSE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN ITALY. GARDNER

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## Message Attributes

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